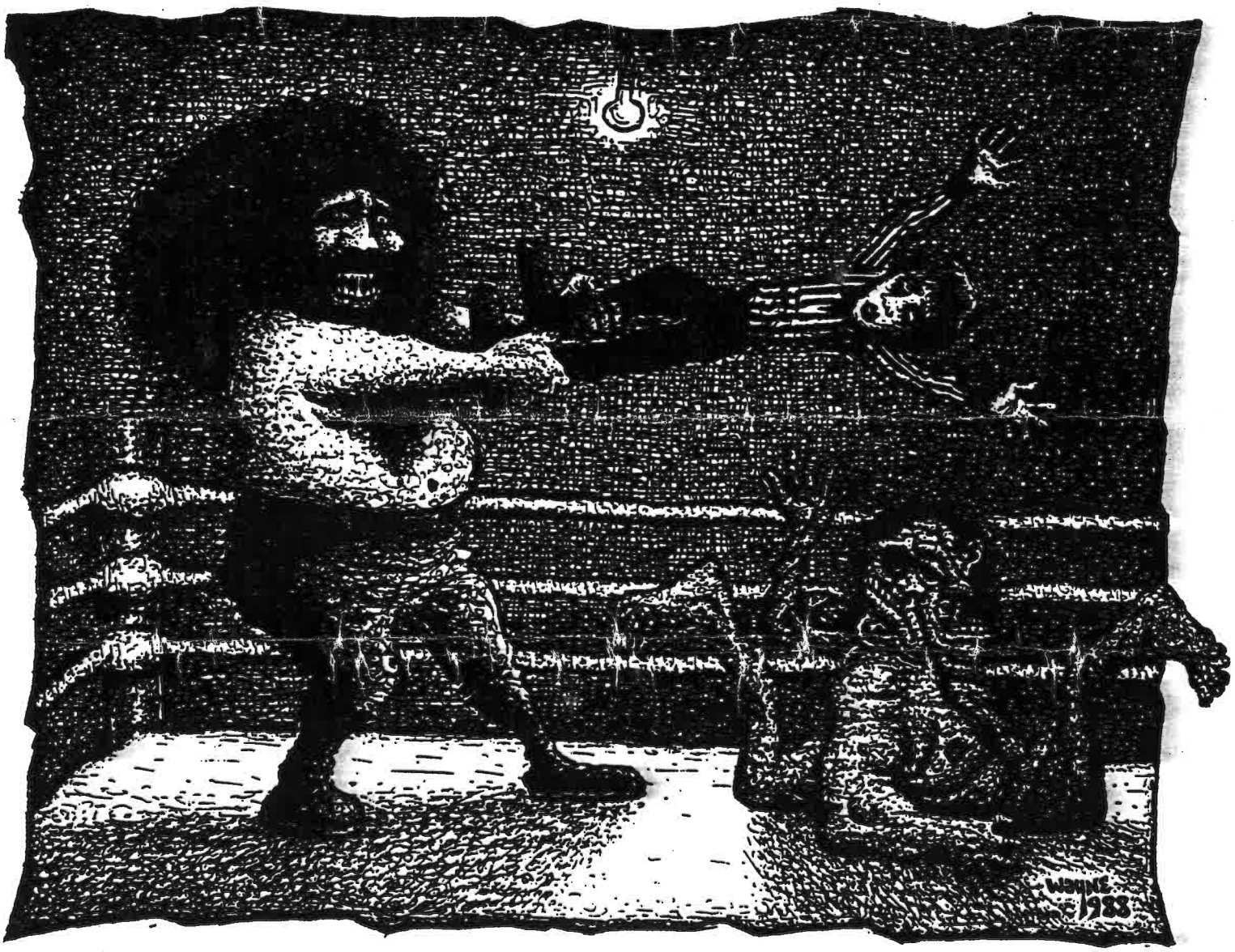
ISSUE 25

WRESTLING THEN & NOW

FEBRUARY 1992

Evan Ginzburg-Editor/Publisher P.O. Box 471 Oakland Gardens Station Flushing, NY 11364



THE CUBAN ASSASSIN TERRORIZING CALGARY! (1970'S)
BY: WAYNE ST. WAYNE

FOR MORE ON THE GREAT REGIONS OF THE PAST, DON'T YOU DARE MISS WT&N'S ANNUAL DUE OUT NEXT MONTH! DETAILS INSIDE ON PAGE 2! A TRUE COLLECTOR'S ITEM!

THE EDITOR'S SPACE BY: EVAN GINZBURG

Welcome y'all. The oldest white man in America to have seen House Party 2 is back with another big issue of WT&N!

First off, a VERY special announcement. In March, I'll be presenting WT&N'S first annual! It's going to be A SALUTE TO THE GREAT TERRITORIES. With access to Howard Roth's incredible collection of 10,000 programs, I will be presenting the most ambitious project of its kind as we chronicle the various territories with countless clippings, line-up sheets, articles, interviews etc. We're looking at approximately 50 jam-packed pages and the cost will be $7.00. It is a monumental project which should serve as a concise history of professional wrestling in the U.S. & Canada and I'm counting on your support. Please order today so I have an idea of how many to print up! It will arrive in your home sometime in March, and nostalgia lovers will treasure this unique package full of rare items. (If you don't order, your subscription will not be affected). It's always been a dream of mine to put something likeittogether, so PLEASE SUPPORT THIS PROJECT-- YOU WON'T BE DISAPPOINTED (Note caps for emphasis!).

In the "Can't Go Home Again" department, I returned to Madison Square Garden for the first time in 4 years, to see a nightmarish card headlined by an 8 minute Flair-Hogan 3* match. Flair's not going to save these guys; they're beyond help. Thanks to AWF President Gordon Scozzari for the freebie, but I'd rather just keep the memories!

Did enjoy seeing Jushin Liger at the WCW Meadowlands card. Unfortunately, 6 of the other 8 matches on the show were so horrendous that it was still a long, rough night. Liger-Pillman was a 4* dream match- let's hope for more appearances by other foreign greats to spice up these otherwise mediocre shows.

Speaking of disappointments, a few years back I had a big choice. Should I go see Jazz sax legend Sonny Rollins play solo, or go see the Freebirds-Roadies headline a Pro Wrestling USA show? At the time, nobody was hotter that these tag-teams, and on paper, it was a classic showdown. After much soul searching I went with the wrestling, saw a lethargic 12 minute, 2 1/2* match, and missed what was ultimately a legendary concert. Clearly, a BAD choice. The difference today is that I'd EXPECT to be disappointed by a wrestling show, and would go with the music every time. I've changed, and unfortunately so has wrestling!

YEARBOOK AND ALL OTHER CHECKS PAYABLE TO EVAN GINZBURG! THANK YOU!

IRON MIKE EINHORN- THE HUMAN TRIPOD
(The Man Who Knows Wrestling Like The Palm Of His Hand)

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Hi, & what be happenin'?

I spent New Year's Eve like I always do: checked into a window-less hotel room, sat at the edge of the bed and stared at the floor for about eight hours, then I checked out.

New WWF concession item: "Forever Piper"- Spray Cologne.

My father gave me a camera for a going away present, which caught me by surprise, since I didn't know I was going away.

Question for the BUSHWACKERS: Have you ever been struck by lightning?

Does anyone remember Bonomo Turkish taffy?

I'm looking for a girl who's a tramp in bed and June Cleaver when she steps out of it.

Five Down, Ten to go, Miss Francis?

Isn't it a coincidence that Lou Gehrig got Lou Gehrig's Disease?

You kids, don't try those suplexes at home (try it at a friend's house).

I'm on a new diet: distilled water and MARS bars..

B.B. King was right, the thrill IS gone.

Whenever I think of the past, it brings back memories.

If you saw the Broadway hit "CATS" recently, you might have seen Evan Ginzburg. He was sitting in the 3rd row!

Have you checked out the bodies of some wrestlers doing steroids lately? Hey, call me old fashioned, but I prefer my veins INSIDE my body!

In closing remember: "Cowards dies many times before their deaths; the valiant never taste of death but once."

STEPHEN MEYERSON'S COLUMN

SHORT POEMS:
External appearance virility...Internal appearance sterility...Can limit an athlete's mobility...Distorting a lack of ability.
Executive VP Jim...Supporting the former Uvalde Slim...Father and son...The kid's number 1...The booker is not looking trim.
Stamford is moving ahead...Atlanta is deep in the red...Master of gimmicry...Disaster of mimicry...The latter is being misled.
Promoter controlling the crowd...Sweetening noises too loud...Roddy Piper...Much too hyper...Vincent you should not be proud.

Will Scott Hudson write a history of the English Lords in Arena Report?
The phrase "copycat bulletin" is being used carelessly. I've seen at least 20 bulletins and none appeared to be copycats. When using that phrase, please list the bulletin or bulletins you're referring to. Names please!
If you're wondering why this column seems so juvenile, it may be because it was written in the children's section of my local library. It's too noisy in the adult section which is more of a social club than a library.
Weeknights on CNN, one can see tag team wrestling in prime time as 2 liberals and 2 conservatives grapple with a wide variety of issues the way a versatile wrestler works many styles. Since the regular panelists, Pat Buchanan and Mike Kingsley, are often laughing, it's hard to tell if it's a work or a shoot. There are frequent Q and A transitions, and the questions are stiff. There is no stalling since panelists often speak without tagging in. If you like outside interference, you'll like Crossfire. As 2 panelists are debating, 1 or both of the other panelists is likely to interrupt. At times it becomes a verbal brawl with all 4 shouting at once. Occasional participant Robert Novak is especially adept in these loud, heat generating free for alls. A panelist is sometimes pinned down by a question, but neither team ever submits. Every match ends in a 30 minute broadway at the 8 pm EST curfew. By changing 2 of the panelists and the issues on a nightly basis, the producers are able to keep the angles fresh. Having a hot guest like Oliver North on a rare basis is similar to bringing in Andre for 1 night. Since Ted Turner owns CNN and the producers of Crossfire are already on the payroll, why not involve them in booking WCW.
Was the plumber's wife at Halloween Havoc to plug up the leaks which Paul E. was accused of?
Will Inoki, Baba, Choshu, Fujinami and the original Tiger Mask form a promotion called Old Japan? Will the foreign talent include Lou Thesz, Buddy Rogers, Mil Mascaras, Bruno Sammartino and Ox Baker?
If you know any 970, 900 or 540 numbers, do yourself and your wallet a favor and lose them.
The problem with some inside fans is that their favorite songs are "I'm In With The In Crowd" by Dobie Gray and "Follow The Leader" by Joy Division, a group which evolved into New Order.
At his Summer press conference, Vince McMahon was guilty of a Roidian, I mean Freudian, slip. He said, "There is no wrestling in the WWF." He then corrected himself and said, "There is no drug problem in the WWF."
The worst commercial of 1991 has to be the ridiculously overproduced commercial with Bo and Foreman. I immediately muted the volume or zapped the channel when it came on.

COMMENTS FROM A FAN

By - Diane Devine

Being a native of Missouri, I am proud to have witnessed the very best in professional wrestling throughout my home state.

Promoters LeRoy McGuirk, Gust Karras and Sam Muchnick gave fans outstanding matches. I knew LeRoy and Gust well. I still keep in touch with Mr. Muchnick.

When I recall wrestlers over the years, one of the most popular was my dear friend Ronnie Etchison.

It's quite sad for me to inform you Ronnie is confined to a nursing care center in his hometown, St. Joseph, Missouri. His condition is similiar to alzheimers disease most likely caused from his early days in boxing and wrestling.

When I visited Ronnie last year it was indeed a shocking, heart breaking experience. He's no longer the man or wrestler we remember. He's thin, frail and unable to carry conversation. Somehow tho, Ronnie remembered me at that visit. A visit I won't forget!

Ronnie's wrestling career goes back to the late 1930s. He was a Golden Gloves champion. Then tried a few pro boxing matches but disliked the "elements" of boxing.

It was then he was spotted by St. Joseph wrestling promoter Gust Karras. Karras knew talent and a future star. After talking with Ronnie, he took him under wing as his protege.

In 1938 Etchison won the St. Joseph City Championship. In 1939 he became the first Missouri champion.

World War II started and Ronnie went into the army. Both he and Paul Boesch were on the same ship. Infact, they entertained troops on board wrestling while sailing to Germany.

Harry Truman attended the Kansas City matches as he was a big fan. The only time Ronnie met him was in Europe. He stood "honor guard" for then President Truman after Roosevelt died. Ronnie's outfit had the best record of anybody in the ETO at that time. They were 99 days on the line without a break.

Ronnie was shot in the leg, patched up and sent back out on the line to fight the Germans.

The 1950s were good to Ronnie. He became a legend on the West Coast. A fan idol, he was tagged the "Wonder Boy". His favorite promoter to work for was San Francisco's Joe Malceiwicz.

Etchison held many titles. He never got the world belt but came close on many occasions.

Besides wrestling and being a referee at times, Ronnie worked the final years of his career for All Star Wrestling in Kansas City. He booked spot shows throughout the circuit. Many times at these shows he was ring annoucer and time keeper.

Ronnie also had a wrestling training class in St. Joseph weekly. Among those to make the pro ranks were Mike George, Ed Wiskoski (now Colonel DeBeers), Bruce Reed and Art Crews.

January 4, 1980 before more than 11,000 fans at St. Louis' Kiel Auditorium, I watched Ronnie's final match. He teamed with Sailor Art Thomas against Bulldog Bob Brown and The Polish Prince, Ed Wiskoski. After being double-teamed, Ronnie was victim to a beckbreaker and body press from his student Wiskoski!

October of 1980, Ronnie Etchison stepped out of the wrestling world forever. In an interview with Ronnie seven years ago I inquired: "What do you want me to tell the fans as the reason you quit wrestling completely?"

His reply: Well, I don't really know how to put it. It's a smart guy that knows when to quit. And quit on top before you become a preliminary palooka. Roughly putting it."

Ronnie worked as a bartender and later a bouncer at St. Joseph bars. He was quite popular among patrons, most of who recalled his wrestling days.

Once out of the wrestling business, he never looked back. He never watched TV wrestling but the bar customers kept him updated. October, 1987 during the early stage of his illness Ronnie attended live matches for the first time since retiring. He went to a WWF show to see friend Jim Brunzell.

Brunzell and Mike George were the Central states tag team champions back during the early 70s.

His long career speaks for itself. He always gave more than 100 percent in the squared circle. He knew how to treat the public. Ronnie never neglected his fans. He would sign autographs, pose for pictures or just stop and chat. He was honest, sincere and he cared!

Ronnie was one of the classier guys in this business. Many of the current types could take a lesson from him in many ways.

His fans will always remember. Ronnie, we love you!

Official Wrestling Program

MUNICIPAL AUDITORIUM

Topeka, Kansas

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1951

8:30 P. M.

★ TAG TEAM MATCH ★

MAIN EVENT

RONNIE ETCHISON, 228 lbs. - St. Joseph, Mo.
and
DENNIS CLARY, 225 lbs. - Los Angeles, Calif.

vs.

DANNY McSHAIN, 205 lbs. - Los Angeles
and
"JUDO" JACK TERRY, 215 lbs. - Dayton, Ohio

Best two falls out of three to a finish

SEMI FINAL

PAUL ORTH, 220 lbs. - Toledo, Ohio

vs.

JOHNNY VALENTINE, 210 lbs. - Florida

Best two falls out of three with a 45 minute time limit

SPECIAL BOUT

PAUL STAFFORD, 200 lbs. - Denver, Colo.

vs.

BOB CLAY, 205 lbs. - Muskogee, Okla.

One fall with a 30 minute time limit

AUSPICES

Referee — — — — — JACK HADER
Timekeepers — — CONNIE KNIGHT
— — — "PEP" PEPPLE
Announcer — — — DR. DEMAREE
Promoter — — — — JIM SALLAS

American Legion Wrestling Commission
CLIFF SNYDER, Chairman
ARTHUR DAVIS — REUBEN BURNS
FLOYD IRISH — HERB WILSON
Athletic Commissioner
FRANK GILLESPIE, Ex. Sec'y.
ARTHUR DAVIS, Inspector

AMERICAN LEGION

Etchison Starts Comeback

Ronnie Etchison is on the comeback trail and hopes to achieve something few, if any, professional athletes have ever done.

The first match Etchison had in St. Louis was during the autumn of 1939. Thus, Etchison has wrestled in the 1930s, the 1940s, the 1950s, the 1960s and 1970s.

If Etchison is successful, Ronnie plans to enter combat in the 1980s. That would make Etchison probably the lone athlete active in six different decades. 12/1/79

ANOTHER SUPER CLASSIC FOR ST. JOSEPH

3/17/77

St. Joseph wrestling promoter Ronnie Etchison is in the process of lining up another All Star Super Wrestling card for Friday night, May 6.

There was so much good comment from you wrestling fans on the last St. Joseph Super Classic that Ronnie decided to bring another All Star card to the St. Joseph City Auditorium.

Some names Etchison mentioned as possibles on the May 6 card are: Rufus R. Jones, Roger Nature Boy Kirby and World Champion Harley Race.

Pro Wrestling

5/2/75 (Friday At Kiel)

Harley Race won two of three falls from Terry Funk to retain the Missouri heavyweight title as recognized by the National Wrestling Alliance. Race won the first fall in 20:12, Funk the second in 5:06 and Race the Third in 7:17
Dick The Bruiser pinned Ox Baker, 7:20
Edouard Carpentier and Pat O'Connor defeated Bobby Hennon and Van Raschke in Australian tag-team exhibition. Carpentier pined Van Raschke in 15:04
Ray Stevens pinned Ted Gates, 12:02
Rocky Johnson and Bill Miller went to a 20-minute draw
Ronnie Etchison and Art Thomas won two of three falls from Angelo and Lanny Poffo in Australian tag-team exhibition. Lanny Poffo was disqualified in the deciding fall for jumping on

BACK ISSUE SPECIAL- ISSUES 1-24 ONLY $20!

Don G. Smith's

A HISTORY OF THE VON ERICHS IN ST. LOUIS

Part One - The Sixties and 1978

Today, the name Von Erich conjures up images of wasted talent and tragedy. People remember Fritz pushing his sons to the point of destroying WCCW. They think of the mysterious death of David Von Erich in Japan, the suicides of Mike and Chris, Kevin's collapse in the ring, Kerry's motorcycle accident, and a host of other unsavory stories that will someday probably supply the fabric for yet another exploitative made-for-TV movie. But let's go back to a time before the tragedy, to a time when the name Von Erich was synonymous with wrestling excellence. And let's go back to St. Louis, a city once synonymous with wrestling excellence.

St. Louis was good to Fritz Von Erich. Second as a national heel only to Killer Kowalski, Fritz was a staple of Sam Muchnick's St. Louis NWA promotion. Week after week on "Wrestling at the Chase" he used the dreaded iron claw to dispatch jobbers such as Angleo Poffo and Joe Tangaro. At the same time he was performing in legendary matches at Kiel Auditorium against such foes as Dick the Bruiser, Johnny Valentine, Gene Kiniski, Pat O'Connor, John Paul Henning, and Lou Thesz. Fritz would enter the ring wearing a black sweater and wrestling tights. Curling his lower lip into a disdainful snear, he would stand tall in the ring amidst the heavy boos of the patrons. In interviews he would hype the next program at Kiel by guaranteeing a victory against his scheduled opponent. Unless the opponent was Lou Thesz, the guarantee was usually good. To make sure that no one forgot the date of the next card, Fritz always managed to mention it five or six times per interview. Once he so provoked Don Cunningham in what I believe to have been a shoot interview that the St. Louis announcer blurted out "Why are you so damn arrogant?" And that was at a time when the "D" word was not used on the air. Anyway, Fritz went on to claim the AWA heavyweight championship before starting his own Texas NWA promotion: World Class Championship Wrestling.

Years passed, and in 1978 Fritz Von Erich's sons began to take St. Louis by storm. Barely out of his teens, David was the first to appear. Before his Kiel Auditorium debut, David disposed of a few jobbers on "Wrestling at the Chase." Then on February 17, he defeated Seki at the Kiel using his father's famous iron claw hold. It is important to note that Sam Muchnick showed his usual booking smarts by initially using the youngster low on the card. Standing 6-7, David looked more like a gangly basketball player than a professional wrestler. In short, he wasn't very believable. Yet it soon became evident that he had the desire to perfect his craft. The victories continued:

March 3 - David beat Johnny Valiant (second match on card)

March 17 - David beat Doug Somers (second match on card)

June 16 - David and Tom Andrews beat Doug Somers and Bennie Ramirez (opening bout on card).

On a show aired September 30, Kevin Von Erich made his St. Louis debut on "Wrestling at the Chase." Kevin was, of course, shorter than David, but he sported a more muscular build.

Then on October 6, Kevin made his debut at the Kiel. In the opening bout he teamed with Tom Andrews to defeat Jesse Ventura and Gene Stevens in two straight falls. Kevin again appeared in the opening bout on October 20 as he and Tom Andrews wrestled Jesse Ventura and "Bulldog" Bob Brown.

On November 20, both David and Kevin appeared on the same card at Kiel, though not together. In the opening bout, David disposed of Buck Robley, while in the second match Kevin stopped "Bulldog" Bob Brown. Both Von Erichs showed poise in the ring, and the fans were behind them one hundred percent. Wisely, however, Sam Muchnik did not attempt to hurry the process. By keeping the Von Erich phenomenon low on the card, he whetted the appetite of the fans for major clashes down the road, and he built up the credibility of the brothers by not throwing them immediately into matches against such foes as Harley Race, Ted DiBiase, Blackjack Lanza, and King Kong Brody, none of whom the fans would have accepted as Von Erich victims at that early stage of the youngsters' careers. However, Kevin's victory over Brown was a major step in establishing the young star's credibility, for Brown was still at the top of his game at that point, and his brawling style had earned him the respect of St. Louis fans. From that time on, St. Louis fans took Kevin seriously.

While many have criticized Kevin as a wrestler, his ring work was actually exciting, and the impact he had on female fans was awesome. In the coming few years he would and his brothers would become a major attraction in the Gateway to the West.

TONIGHT—8:30
WRESTLING
KIEL AUDITORIUM

Best-of-Three Falls
JACK BRISCO
Vs.
"NATURE BOY"
RIC FLAIR

BRODY & BROWN Vs.
BRUISER & DAVID VON ERICH
KEVIN VON ERICH
Vs. WISKOSKI
BACKLUND Vs. MURDOCH
Plus 3 fine prelims

TICKETS: Arcade Bldg., Kiel Auditorium
PRICES: $3 - $4 - $5 - $6
Telephones: 436-4400, 231-7487

Exciting Triple Feature
TONIGHT — 8:30
WRESTLING
KIEL AUDITORIUM
16 - man
WRESTLE ROYAL
ANDRE THE GIANT and DICK THE BRUISER
Vs.
KING KONG BRODY and DICK MURDOCH
State King KEVIN VON ERICH vs. JACK BRISCO
plus 4 more matches

Andre

Kevin

TICKETS: Arcade Bldg., Kiel Auditorium
PRICES: $3, $4, $5, $6
Telephones: 436-4400, 231-7487

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES REPORTS THE BOUT

38,000 See Rogers Triumph

O'CONNOR LOSES HIS MAT CROWN

With 38,000 partisans roaring approval of their favorite wrestling son, Buddy Rogers lifted the National Wrestling Alliance's version of the world heavyweight championship from Pat O'Connor Friday night in Comiskey Park.

Well, not exactly lifted, for he accomplished the coup de grace by making himself scarser than a streetcar on State Street when disaster seemed imminent.

O'Connor, a bright lad from New Zealand, hadn't reckoned with the glorious history of the diamond parlor when deftly selecting a bagful of muscle tricks. better known to the gridiron, for defense of his 10-year reign as king of the groaners.

And when he made like one of George Halas's Bears with a menacing flying tackle—in the hallowed home of the White Sox, of all places — Rogers smartly had decided it was not the place for a gent aspiring to climb into the chair of royalty. Consequently, he removed himself to a safer area of the arena.

In his absence. O'Connor became entangled in the ropes and wound up with a groin injury. Rogers. with a quick eye squatter's rights, enforced his claim by merely placing all of his 240 pounds upon O'Connor's deflated chest for the deciding fall.

Rogers had flexed his mighty muscles early in the fray to take the first fall at the 8:30 mark with a knee lift and body press. O'Connor evened matters at 6:00 with a reverse cradle, feeling like the father of his trade, no doubt.

The crowd paid a gross gate of $125,000. A clause guarantees a return match for O'Connor within 60 days.

CHICAGO
SUN-TIMES

SPORTS

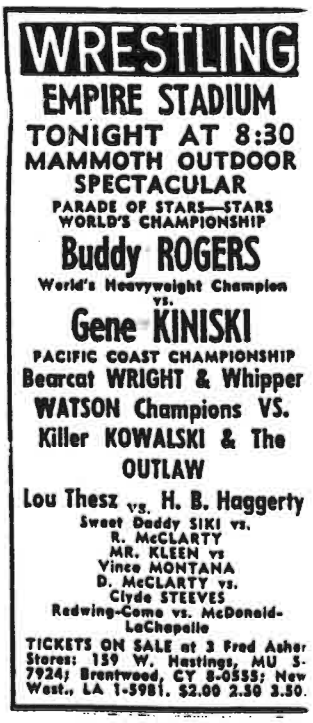
Saturday, July 1, 1961 Page 51

BUDDY ROGERS TALKS TO DR. MIKE LANO ABOUT RIC FLAIR! Exclusive for WT&N.

Buddy Rogers: I want everyone to know that Ric Flair is a helluva worker, and a great guy, he deserves to make some big money.

Lano: Budro, tell us about Charlotte around 76-77...

Rogers: You're probably asking about how I helped put Flair over. Well, Gene Anderson and the Scotts-George Scott should be credited with getting Flair over in the NWA after Verne. We ran some great angles, and Snuka, Flair and even Piper sure got over in a hurry. I would add Flair to my alltime top worker list of Thesz, Gagne, Valentine, Londos, Ed Lewis, Hodge, Kowalski and guess who. Some of the best talkers in my book who were sweet guys too were Blassie and Jerry Graham. I feel bad he's not in good shape in Southern California. I want everyone in New Jersey and the areas where Joel Goodhart promotes to know what a gentleman he is and how much I look forward to seeing my fans and friends. I am very comfortable with a beautiful home here in Florida, but I get a kick out of talking with everyone, and I'm glad they still remember me. It really means a lot, and I think most fans know when you're honestly trying to give back. I think this Steve Williams is one of the top guys of today- man, can he work. Even though I'm not involved at all with the UWF, they have a great guy in Williams. I would love to manage him he is tough, and Baba was smart in getting him signed over from Inoki. They continue to amaze me with the great crowds they draw and how they treat fans with respect in Japan. The people go to the matches with suit and tie, and it's almost an elegant affair. How many of your readers remember when people wore suits to the matches in the 50's--if someone did things the right way around here, we could possibly educate American fans to appreciate Japanese-style wrestling. It would take a lot of work, but my God, it would be worth the trouble. Let's preserve the integrity of our sport, and of the business many of us love so much.



FOR MORE ON ROGERS & O'CONNER SEE THE BACK COVER! FOR MORE RARE CLIPS & ARTICLES, DON'T MISS THE WT&N ANNUAL-- DUE OUT IN JUST ONE MONTH!

INTERVIEW WITH GORGEOUS GEORGE SOUTH

WHERE WERE YOU BORN:I was born in Zionville, NC, believe it or not, and that's right outside of Boone.

DO YOU HAVE ANY BROTHERS OR SISTERS:This may shock you but I have 13 brothers and sisters and I'm the youngest one of the whole clan. All of them are still living but I'm the only one still living in Charlotte, NC. The rest of them live in Boone and right outside of Zionville.

I BET YOU HAVE SOME KIND OF FAMILY REUNION, GEORGE:Well, Billie it's funny you should say that, because I just got a call a couple of days ago from my brother, Wayne, and he called to remind me that we're having our family reunion on the last Saturday of this month. It'll be the first one we've ever had. I'm looking forward to seeing everybody. You know, it's been 6 or 7 years since I've seen some of my brothers.

TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR AMATEUR BACKGROUND:OK..I wrestled 2 years in junior high and then I wrestled 3 years in high school so I have a total of 5 years amateur wrestling and about a year after high school, I turned pro. And I've been wrestling about 10 years, this Dec. I went right through the amateur and then I started pro soon after that.

WHO TRAINED YOU:There was an old-timer by the name of Rusty Roberts. He's from up around Tennessee. He's the first one I ever got in the ring with and I guess he saw how bad I wanted to wrestle because I kept coming back. After getting the tar beat out of me four or five days, believe it or not, they gave me my first match, after about a week. I got beat up but I've not stopped, yet, but Rusty Roboets was the first one that ever got in the ring with me and took time to show me a few moves and everything.

WHO DO YOU CREDIT AS HAVING THE STRONGEST INFLUENCE ON YOU:Well, I would say Rusty Roberts, but I have to go back to the time when I saw Paul Jones wrestle, when I was younger. That was what really made me want to be a professional wrestler. You know, the years of sitting in front of the television, watching Paul Jones wrestle and that's what really got the fire going.

DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER PROFESSION, OTHER THAN WRESTLING:Well, this is all I do, now, Billie. When I first started, I had another job, which I guess most of the wrestlers do. I'm pretty good at printing and held down a printing job for a couple of years and held that to sort of go back to, if I need to. It is really hard to make a good living with no other income other than what the promoters want to pay. I suggest to the young wrestlers now, you know. They've got dreams of becoming the world champion and traveling around the world and everything but I always suggest that they keep a little job on the side. I would even suggest that to some that is making a fortune, nowadays, something that you can fall back on because you never know when one single injury could end wrestling for you.

DID YOU ATTEND COLLEGE:No, I did not. As soon as I graduated, from North Gaston High School, I started training, and that probably wasn't even a year later. When I first started out, I would travel around from town to town to the matches and I would actually pay these guys to let me get into the ring with them. I knew that was the only way I could learn was to just get into the ring and it didn't matter whether it was in front of one person or a thousand.

WE KNOW THAT YOU ARE WRESTLING PRIMARILY IN THE INDEPENDENTS BUT YOU HAVE ALSO SPENT A LOT OF TIME IN THE MAJOR LEAGUES. WHICH ONE DO YOU LIKE BEST AND WHY?Well, I tell you what..I have a lot of respect for the independent guys because that is where I started out and that's where you find out whether you really want it or not. Anybody can go right into the major leagues and get big money and go right to the top. I've always said anybody can do that but to stay in this independent stuff, steady, a lot of times, you don't get paid anything, the trips are hard, That braces you. It's like I tell people, it's like crawling before you walk. You get in it, you learn the sport, and if you have enough confidence in yourself, then the major leagues are going to come. I like the major leagues for the publicity you get and, of course, for the money, so you can pay your bills and everything but if it wasn't for the independents, the major leagues wouldn't be where they are today.

WHERE ARE YOU WRESTLING NOW:I'm currently wrestling for the Profession Wrestling Federation based out of Charlotte, NC and I've been with them for 2 years and I'm currently the PNF Jr Hwt Champion and we wrestle a lot up north and in Virginia, a little bit into Kentucky and in North and South Carolina. We are trying to go into Tennessee and branch out a little bit more and also into Georgia. I'm also still doing some work for the NCW, doing some tv for them and for the last year or so, I've been up north for the WWF and also did some tv for them.

WHAT TITLES HAVE YOU HELD:The first title I ever had was the ECW Rookie of the Year title. I've also been the West Coast Tag Team champions, which was about 3 years ago, with Gary Royal. We held that title for about a year or so. I've held the PNF tag team titles, with The Rising Sun.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE USE OF STEROIDS:Well, I've been in this business, like I said, for 10 years or so and I've seen the good and the bad side of it and something I've never understood, Billie, is why anyone would want to pump themselves up to look good for a couple of years and then have go through all the pain and after effects of the steroids. I, myself, cannot put a price tag on my health. No amount of money can justify the use of steroids. You know, I would not jeopardize my health. I think with Superstar Billy Graham coming forward and confessing what they have done to him, it looks like some of these guys would open their eyes and see what they do for you. You know, you look good for a couple of years but nobody thinks of what is going to happen to them in later years. And, you know, what good is all the money, if you can't get up and go to the bank to get it.

DO YOU THINK THE PROMOTIONS SHOULD HAVE A RANDOM STEROID TESTING:Yes, I do. Even with NCW, they have really gotten into the physical before the matches, although they haven't gotten into the steroid testing, it's a step in the right direction. A lot of times, when they are sitting in there, having their blood-pressure checked, it's the first time they've ever had any kind of physical. So, this may be opening some doors for steroid testing in the future.

WHY DO YOU THINK THE ATTENDANCE TO THE LIVE SHOWS HAVE BEEN SO LOW:Television has been the best thing in the world for wrestling but I also feel like it's been the worst thing. I blame a lot of it on the buildings, too. By the-time you pay for the tickets to the show, pay for parking, buy a program, and buy the kids a souvenir, you've spent a small fortune before you sit down to see the show, and especially if it's a man with a family. Taking wrestling out of the smaller arenas and armories and only running in these big coliseums and everything, has had a lot to do with it, too. It's just a real mess. I remember when I was just little, going to the little park centers and stuff and seeing one or two main events and a couple of undercards. I thought there was nothing like that. But, then here comes television and I think here in Charlotte, you can watch 5 or 6 hours of it. And, I guess, like anything else, people can get burnt-out, and when they can watch it at home, they're not going to pay to see it in the building.

WHAT ARE YOUR IMMEDIATE PLANS:Well, Billie, I am a real strong Christian, and am real involved in my church and it just comes down to me loving the Lord and I thank him for the ability that he has given me. I pray for a lot more opportunities to speak to a lot of these kids, Billie. Maybe, I could be the one thing that they need to hear that might help them get their life straight. You got to face it...these little kids look up to wrestlers like nobody else I've seen. You know, when my kids get a little older, one of the wrestlers might take them to the side and say, hey, money's not important. I thank the Lord, Billie, because I've become friends with most of the wrestlers that the kids look up too and call their heros and you learn a lot about them, Billie, when you're in the dressing room and when you're on the road, 8 and 10 hours with them. You learn a lot about them that the kids don't see. A lot of them don't realize what kind of impact they have on these kids. And when you hear of one getting busted for drugs, taking steroids, or anything, the wrestlers don't realize what it does to the kids. I just want to defend the PNF Jr Hwt title, the best I can. You know, sometimes, my wife says, 'Don't you ever think about getting out of wrestling and getting into something else?' And I tell her that whenever the good Lord tells me to do something else, theres nothing you can do about it. You got to listen to him and do it. I want to meet these kids and go around and do drug talks with them and go to these youth groups. To me, that's the whole future of this world and we better take good care of them.

HAVE YOU WRESTLED UNDER ANY OTHER NAME:Yes, like I said, I tagged with Gary Royal and were billed as The Gladiators. I think a lot of the fans will remember that we got upset by the Mulkey Brothers on national television. That was one of the biggest upsets in the world. After that, me and Gary sort of went out separate ways and I came out from under the mask.

WHO HAS BEEN SOME OF YOUR TAG TEAM PARTNERS:I teamed with Rocky King, also teamed with Joel Deaton, Steve Keirn. I teamed with him in the Crockett Cup and that, in itself, was a learning experience.

DO YOU THINK THAT SOME WRESTLERS GET SO USED TO HAVING TAG TEAM PARTNERS THAT IT HAS AN EFFECT ON THEIR SINGLE MATCHES:I sure do. A lot of people thought that Bobby Eaton was not going to make it as a single wrestler. Because he was known for years as a tag team specialist but now he has broken off on his own and has done very well for himself. I think if they want it bad enough, the transition from tag team to singles can be done.

WHAT WRESTLER DO YOU ADMIRE THE MOST:There's probably a handful of them but...I admire Hector Guererro a lot. I respect him and his younger brother, Eddie, probably seeing where they come from and coming from a wrestling family and most of all, I guess, is because they love the Lord.

WHAT SINGLE ACCOMPLISHMENT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF:Well, one of them would have to be winning the PNF Jr Hw title, but also to see some of these kids and the smile on their face when I get a chance to talk with them.

HOW DO WRESTLERS OF TODAY COMPARE TO THE WRESTLERS WHEN YOU FIRST STARTED:Today, there's a whole lot more show and pizazz to it. I guess you need that now days for the crowds to enjoy it but some of the best matches I've ever seen was between Pearl, Mahoo and the Andersons. There was no ring music, no fancy clothes, no animals...they just got in there and just really went at it.

GIVE US YOUR OPINION ON THE STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSIONS:They've got their good points and their bad. Of course, you have to have your license and stuff, but the thing I never agreed with, Billie, was the fact that if a wrestler wrestles under more than one name, he has to have a license for each name. To be honest with you, that can get a little expensive. You go to some of these states and there is nothing said, but then some of them demand these license. I guess what I'm trying to say is, 'if one state has it, they all should have it.' Some of them are standing right there at the door, waiting on you.

HAVE YOU HAD ANY SERIOUS INJURIES:No I've really been blessed. I thank the Lord that I've not had any serious injuries. I've had some cracked ribs, a couple sprains, but that's about it.

HOW TALL ARE YOU:Billie, I'm 6' even.

WHAT DO YOU WEIGH:238 lbs.

ARE YOU MARRIED:I've been married almost 9 years. My wifes' name is Melissa.

DO YOU HAVE CHILDREN:I have 2 small boys. Little George, Jr. is 6 yrs old and Brock is 4 yrs old. I took little George, Jr. to my matches all this summer and I can see it's already getting in his blood. He enjoys getting in that ring and playing around.

DO YOU THINK HE'LL BE STEPPING INTO DADDYS' SHOES:Yes, I hope so.

BIRTHDAY:September 7

DEBUT:December 18, 1980, against Beautiful Blonde. I won that one. It took place at Bessember High School, in Bessember City, NC. Then, a couple of days later, we had a re-match and he beat the tar out of me. So, I've been learning from day one.

WHAT OTHER PROMOTIONS HAVE YOU WORKED FOR:NWA, which was probably one of my favorites when it was Jim Crockett Promotions. I was with them for 5 years. The WWF, up north, the ICW, currently with the PNF. I also did some work for the old Mid-South promotion, when Bill Watts had it and also worked some in Florida and some of the other little independents up and down North and South Carolina. I've always said that if you really learn to wrestle, you can let that speak for you. You can talk money, after you learn to wrestle. So many young guys can't even tie their boots, but they want money. People can say what they want to about Jim Crockett, but I give the man credit. He would give these young guys a chance and he was good to work for. We may not have realized it at the time, but as a promoter, you are faced with a number of problems. I have since found this out, personally, since I am into part of the promotional end of wrestling with the PNF and, of course, we are by no means as big an outfit and Crockett had but we are understanding now, more and more, some of the problems and solutions in running a promotion, such as worrying if the wrestlers are going to be on time, if plane flights will be on time, if the ring will arrive in plenty of time, and those are just a few.

WHO HAVE BEEN SOME OF YOUR TOUGHEST OPPONENTS:I would say, Ronnie Garvin, Hands of Stone... The Ultimate Warrior...Tim Horner and Brad Armstrong (they may not be getting the publicity that some of the bigger names get but they some of the most solid wrestlers, anywhere.) Also Ivan Koloff.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MOVE:I like the flying neck-breaker. Bobby Eaton is known for that move and I think he is one of the best when it comes to the flying maneuvers and moves off the top rope. In fact, I learned the flying neck-breaker from him.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE!

WHAT DO YOU DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME:As corny as it may sound, I spend as much time as I can with my two boys. I'm real involved in my church and my and my preacher go around and visit the shut-ins, and I really enjoy that. Some of the older people that can't get out anymore are the ones we visit most. We take tapes from our Sunday School to them and just drop in for a moment and just see how they are doing. I've been doing this for the last 3 years.
HAVE YOU APPEARED IN ANY TV OR MOVIES:Yes, I did parts in the 'Learning the Ropes' series, with Lyle Alzado. I've also done some commercials with Michael Hayes, called Night Tracks.
HOBBIES:Yes, me and my boys enjoy shooting basketball.
WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST EMBARRASSING MOMENT:Theres' been a bunch of them. Probably, in Roanoke, Virginia, when I was wrestling Brad Armstrong and I was dressed as The Gladiator in the blue outfit and the ring announcer introduced me as George South. People laughed and I don't think anybody has forgotten that and Brad was laughing so hard, as a matter of fact, we coulda't finish the match. The next night we were in Richmond, Virginia and they had already heard about it and everyone was chanting...George South. I don't think to this day, the ring announcer even realizes what he did.
FAVORITE MUSIC:I like Christian music real good. It helps me make it through the day. I like country music, too.
FAVORITE MUSIC ENTERTAINER:Probably a group called Heaven Bound and a guy called Ray Boltz. He sings christian songs and he's got some real good songs.
FAVORITE FOOD:I love cornbread and milk. I was raised on that.
WHAT ADVISE DO YOU HAVE FOR THE YOUNG GUYS JUST BEGINNING IN THE WRESTLING SPORT:My best advise to them, Billie, is to get their life right with the Lord. And what I mean by that is to ask Him what he wants them to do. But, if the Lord doesn't have plans for you to make it big in this business, you can beat your head against the wall, all the time...but it won't happen. I would also say for them to learn the sport well, don't worry about the money right off. If you have enough confidence in your ability, and you learn the sport, then you can ask for any kind of money you want, later on.
WOULD YOU LIKE TO ADD ANYTHING ELSE TO THIS INTERVIEW, GEORGE, BEFORE WE CLOSE:Just to say that I appreciate you taking the time to speak with me and I'm going to continue to defend this FWF title and keep up my involvement in my church.
THANK YOU, GEORGE, AND WE WISH YOU THE VERY BEST.

RANDOM MEANDERINGS BY: S.O. TERRIC (FORMER CALGARY WRESTLER)

Calgary, Alberta. Canada's immortal Stampede Wrestling circuit---perhaps 1986. Some long road trips. Some moderate. Vans stuffed full of workers from the UK and Japan and the USA as well as local guys. Parties on the road, arena rats, practical jokes...

I've heard this story a few times. I don't know whether it's fact or fantasy. I wasn't an eyewitness but, having been around the circuit with the individuals involved, I can picture it.

Seems there was this tall, slim jobber who craved some bulk on his frame. He acquired steroids from, oh, SOMEONE in the territory. Or so he thought.

The purveyor of the substance had, in fact, substituted the original contents of the vial with his own urine.

Imagine puncturing your buttock with a syringe, expecting to induce physical and psychological burst of mass and cuts. Getting into intense mirror study on a frequent basis from that moment on. A few years later, reading Random Meanderings in Wrestling Then and Now and wondering...

EPILOGUE: No, the CUBAN ASSASSIN wasn't involved in this alleged episode. I just wanted his name to appear in this article in large print, since he's on the cover of this issue.

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THE AWF (CAROLINAS, 70'S/EARLY 80'S) BY: A. NONYMOUS

CHARLIE BABB:
Outspoken, short, fat, cigar smoking promoter and owner of the AWF, who looked like something from a grade B boxing movie, could sling profanities even a marine drill sergeant never heard of, and did know how to run some hot angles. Some who worked for him claimed him great, others branded him a total crook. Either way, he was a colorful little man who could tell stories to no end, when you got him going and loved drinking Phillips Screwdrivers.

BRUTE BERNARD:
Jim "Brute" Bernard, the southern answer to George Steele, did many shows for Babb. Old and fading when he was active for the AWF, he was only a shell of his former self, when he and the late Skull Murphy were a hot tag team. Bernard died of accidental gunshot wounds, but Babb refuted rumors of suicide, saying Brute was "@$!&ing around" with a gun, when he got killed, to use his words exactly. Unlike Eddie Graham, Yukon Eric, Don Eagle and others who "took it home," his death was probably accidental, though dumb...

NATUREBOY TONY ROBINSON:
A super, lightweight heel with flashy robes and a great gimmick to match. His career and life went down the drain via a love triangle, in which he killed someone for a lovesick woman he was crazy for, and caught the rap himself. A waste of life and a sad story, but one can hardly feel sorry for him.

PLAYBOY BARRY HILL:
Unlike Marcial Bovee, Melesio Goden, and other pseudo-Portuguese, Hill actually was of Portuguese heritage, his real last name being Oliver. The name was an inside joke derived from Blueberry Hill, a South Carolina bar. Worked as a Terry Garvin type clone, but only as manager role. Nothing extraordinary.

LINDA DARNELL:
Small, blonde, and perky, she was one of the girls frequently used by Babb. Although branded a cheapskate by many, he did go category on girls, using this one, Vivian St. John, and others out of Moolah's school which is presumedly defunct by now. It was on one of his cards, if memory serves, Darnell got her nose broken badly by accident.

MICKEY STRICKLAND:
A US Champion for the group, with a belt about as meaningful as a handful of cigar ashes flicked from Babb's cigar. Not a bad worker by any means and Charlie actually gave him some pointers which helped him get over all the better. He got to be decent and really didn't need the ludicrous belt to help make an impression on the crowd anyway, but promotions are all the same and everyone likes a belt for a prop, it seems, even though the extent of his US crown covered only 2 1/2 states at best, which was roughly as meaningful as the old ICW World Title represented in Kentucky.

TIM DEAN:
A scrawny, bleached blonde who thought he was the greatest thing since Frank Gotch. Actually pulled strings to get a feature in a magazine or two in the early 80s, and how is still a mystery. Talked a great bout but couldn't wrestle his way out of a paper bag.

TOP TEN NEW GIMMICKS FOR 1992

by Vic Stanley

Although this piece does not really qualify as either a "Then" or a "Now", here are a few projected angles for what will hopefully turn out to be a fruitful year for wrestling.

1. STEVE AND EDIE - THE GOURMETS - Inspired by the plethora of 4 star restaurants he frequented while on constant tour in Europe and Japan, Dr. Death Steve Williams decides to change his gimmick from a brutal superman to that of an untrustworthy professional chef. Accompanied to the ring by Miss Edie, his treacherous female "hostess", Williams is allowed to ride roughshod over the GWF since, following every TV taping, he prepares an expansive buffet for Joe Pedicino.

2. LAX, RASH AND FLUSH - THE DEMO-ROIDS - After meeting with limited success following the demise of the original Demolition tag team, Bill Eadie, Barry Darsow and Brian Adams reunite as a trio of heels who are in a constant foul mood due to a nagging combination of piles, irregularity, Jock itch and steroid abuse.

3. THE TUSHWHACKERS - Luke and Butch make an unexpected "Gay" turn much to the chagrin of parents everywhere. Since these 2 have been abusing fans ever since their entry into the WWF, perhaps it is time for them to teach all the little whackers how to abuse themselves.

4. LaTOYA B. BADD - Mark Herro did not have to change his gimmick very much to accomplish this startling transformation. All that was required was a nose job and a subsequent nude layout in Blue Boy Magazine. He does things with a boa constrictor that Jake Roberts could not even dream of. Badd continues to deny the rumor that he and "Penis-head" were married in a secret ceremony.

5. "DEAR ABBY" THE BUTCHER - Abby's popular interview spot replaces the Danger Zone on all syndicated WCW shows. For 10 minutes each week, Abby is allowed to reveal a previously overlooked sensitive side with his tender and sentimental advice to the lovelorn.

6. PAULA ABDULLAH THE BUTCHER - I'm pretty sure that somebody has already thought of this, so I will merely let you form a visual picture on your own.

7. THE CUBIC ZIRCONIUM STUD - In order to reduce overhead within WCW, Jim Herd was forced to lower the budgetary allotments for each performer's assigned gimmicks. This was his first and most obvious move.

8. STINK - Sorry! This one was just TOO easy!

9. LEX "DON'T CALL ME FREDDIE!" KREUGER - After being immolated in a flash paper angle gone awry and left for dead, Lex Luger reemerges as a hideously disfigured wrestler with a really bad attitude who leaves piles of dead, mutilated jobbers at every house show.

10. HULK HERMAN - Sure, you read may have about this one before in SUSHI, but after all, I wrote it. After 3 months of extensive HGH experiments conducted at the clandestine WWF Genetic Research Foundation Laboratories in Stamford, CT., our fallen hero Pee Wee Herman carves out a new career in wrestling and immediately beats the hell out of Sid Vicious.

REFLECTIONS ON CHICAGO WRESTLING- 1981 BY: RON DOBRATZ

1981 was the year American Wrestling Association world champion, Verne Gagne, retired at age 55. Gagne retired after defeating Nick Bockwinkle at the St. Paul Civic Center on May 10. Gagne made two title defenses at the International Amphitheatre before retiring- both of them against Jerry "call me Crusher" Blackwell. Blackwell was disqualified in their first meeting on March 14, but Gagne scored a clearcut win in their April 25th rematch.

Gagne's retirement was short-lived as Verne agreed to wrestle at Luce's Superbowl VII card on November 21, since he was given a bout with Adrian Adonis. Adonis and his partner Jesse Ventura had been making life miserable for Verne's son Greg, and his tag team partner, Jim Brunzell. Adrian and Jesse started the year in possession of the AWA tag team belts they were awarded amidst confusion after Verne (who held the title with old nemesis Mad Dog Vachon) regained the world championship from Bockwinkel at White Sox Park on July 18, 1980.

Greg and Jim were not matched against the tag champions early in the year. Instead Luce fanned their flaming feud with Bobby Heenan's team of Nick Bockwinkle & Ray Stevens. On March 14, the bout was a 6-man tag match with Spike Huber joining the Highflyers. Stevens and Bockwinkel demanded a rematch after their manager was pinned, but they lost the conventional tag match on April 25 when Greg pinned Bockwinkel.

When Gagne retired, the AWA decided a tournament would be too time consuming, so they awarded the title to former champion Nick Bockwinkel. Bockwinkel defended his title for the first time in 1981 at the Amphitheatre against the Crusher. The Crusher's other 4 Chicago bouts were all tag team affairs with Dick the Bruiser as his partner.

On January 3, Bruiser and Crusher outroughed the combination of John Studd and Jerry Blackwell, who resorted to disqualification to end the contest. Bruiser and Crusher's win brought them a title match with the championship team of Ventura and Adonis. The challengers lost their match to the "East-West Connection" on a count-out. A rematch on May 23 was even more inconclusive, ending in a "no contest."

The third match was charm for Bruiser and Crusher, who won on June 20, however it was six nights too late, as Brunzell and Gagne had defeated the champions in Green Bay on June 14. Chicago was the scene of three more matches between the Highflyers and the East-West Connection. Their July 25 bout ended in controversy, Greg and Jim won the September 12 bout by disqualification, but finally emerged with a clearcut, bloody cage victory on October 17, when Brunzell pinned Adonis.

It was a battle between the top contenders when Billy Robinson met Nick Bockwinkel on January 3. Bockwinkel managed to record the win, pinning Robinson when he had been distracted by Bobby Heenan. When the two met again, it was a title match headlining the Superbowl VII card. Different match- same story. Heenan was Bockwinkel's salvation, bringing about the champion's disqualification that allowed him to leave the ring still in possession of his AWA heavyweight belt.

Not content to just manage the world champion, Heenan also put together a tag team of Ken Patera and Bobby Duncum, which he called the "Black and Blue Express". Heenan's team received a title bout with Gagne and Brunzell on November 21, but the match ended in an indecisive no contest.

Jerry Blackwell proved just how tough he was by defeating Baron von Raschke- not just once, but twice- on May 23 and July 25. Blackwell appeared to be the AWA's most impressive wrestler, until Hulk Hogan, fresh from his appearance as "Thunderlips" in Rocky III, came on the scene. The Hulk beat Blackwell by count-out on October 17, then won mroe decisively on the Superbowl VII card.

Promoter Luce hoped to get the now-popular Baron Von Raschke back on the winning track on August 15, teaming him with Dick the Bruiser against Ray Stevens & Johnny Valiant. However, Bruiser accidentally kneed the Baron with a leap off the top rope. It destroyed their truce and led to Bruiser being battered by three opponents. It didn't stop until Bruiser lay helpless on the mat, the victim of the Baron's claw. On September 12, Bruiser gained revenge, trouncing Von Raschke without any outside interference.

World Wrestling Association champion, Johnny Valiant, made one Amphitheatre title defense, losing to Wilbur Snyder by DQ. Valiant's manger, "Reverend" Tim Hampton's interference brought about the disqualification, just as it was responsible for upsetting Dick the Bruiser to win the title in the first place.

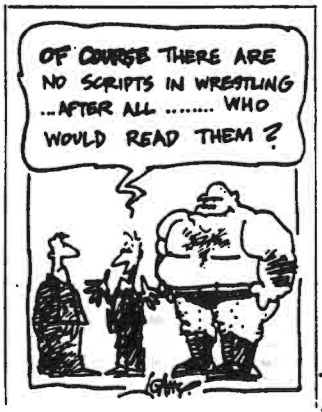
Bobo Brazil, who briefly held the WWA title before surrendering it to BlackJack Mulligan, won six times at the Amphitheatre in 1981. Bobo beat Bobby Van, Tony Leone, Paul Christy, John Studd (by disqualification), Super Destroyer Mark II (Bob Remus in his pre-Sgt. Slaughter days), and at Superbowl VII- Ox Baker. Bobo also was involved with no contest decisions with Jerry Valiant and Mulligan.

The WWA tag team champions, twins Mike and Pat Kelly defended their title on three occasions. Wilbur Snyder was involved in each match, losing with Spike Huber, Bobo Brazil and Dick the Bruiser.

Wherever Hulk Hogan wrestles, so does Ed Leslie. In these pre-"Brutus Beefcake" days, Leslie was billed as Ed Boulder and lost to Tito Santana on November 21. Tito's Chicago bouts were as varied as easy victories over Juan Veley and Ben DeLeon to difficult struggles with John Studd, Adnan El Kaissey, and Bruiser Brody. Tito beat Brody by disqualification, wrestled to a no contest with the Sheik, and pinned Studd.

Three excellent amateur AAU champions turned professional after President Carter's boycott of the 1980 Olympic games in Moscow, and appeared in Chicago during 1981. Greg Wojciecohwski beat Max Blue and drew with Jerry Graham Jr. Laurent Soucie beat Chris Curtis. Brad Rheingans beat Ben DeLeon and Ray Stevens. Stevens' loss came on a disqualification ruling for throwing the ex-North Dakota state wrestler over the top rope.

Black Blood ...
no more than a pain in the neck really!



Laugh It Off

"And in this corner, weighing 69 pounds . . ."

LAST WORD—The tongue does more harm than the fist.

LETTERS TO WT&N!

Enclosed are some articles that may be of interest to your readers. These are only a sampling of what is available.

The first 4 are from the NY Times on Frank Gotch. Notice how they cover pro wrestling as a legitimate sport, which it was then. These make fascinating reading, especially in conjunction with Mike Chapman's book.

The next few are from popular magazines. The article from the 1925 Literary Digest treats the Wayne Munn-Strangler Lewis bout as legit, but I asked Mike Chapman about that and he doubted it. The other articles from Literary Digest and Collier's are also incredible. The article on outlaw promoter Jake Pfeffer admits wrestling had become a work.

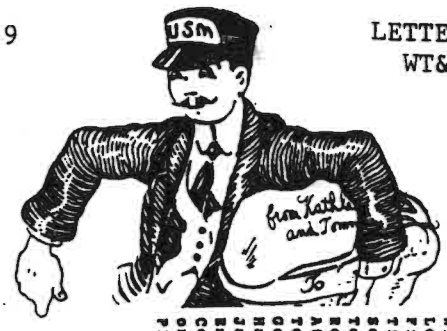
The last 3 articles are also from the NY Times. The 1949 article from the NY Times magazine implies that a match between Rocca and Primo Carnera was a shoot. Mike Champman also said he believed there were shoot matches here and there until as late as the 1960's. The other articles are on regulation.

I've also begun to do some research about wrestling in general, including the history of wrestling as a sport, and wrestling as ritual in Africa. I regard US pro wrestling, although a work, as part of wrestling in general since it is a form of wrestling, though staged, that plays a unique role in our culture. But that's another letter.

Please let me know what you think of these...

EDDIE GOLDMAN
NEW YORK, NY

EDITOR'S NOTE: I think the materials are fascinating, although the print quality of some make reproducing them impossible. Readers, if you enjoyed Mike Chapman's piece on Frank Gotch last issue or are interested in wrestling from earlier this century, I would be glad to reproduce or retype some of the materials Eddie describes above. I am retyping one such item below for your consideration. Note the "tale of the tape" type format that we still see today when major legit boxing matches take place.-E.G.



WRESTLING WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
9/5/11

Principals- Frank Gotch, America George Hackenschmidt, Russia
Winner- Frank A. Gotch of Humboldt, Iowa, champion wrestler of the world.
Loser- George Hackenschmidt of Dorpat, Russia, European champion.
First Fall- Gotch pinned Hackenschmidt with a reverse body hold.
Time- 14:18
Second Fall- Gotch pinned Hackenschmidt with a toe lock. Time- 5:32
Total Wrestling Time- 19:50
Referee- Edward M. Smith
Attendance- 30,000 (estimated)
Total receipts- $87,053
Gotch's share- $21,000 and 50 per cent of moving picture profits.
Hackenschmidt's share- $13,500
Jack Curley, Hackenschmidt's manager, received $29,937 as his share.
Empire Athletic Club's share, $1,250
Conditions- Catch-as-catch-can style. Best two of three falls. Pin falls only to count.
Place- American League Baseball Park Chicago

	GOTCH	HACKENSCHMIDT
33 years	Age	34 years
204 pounds	Weight	224 pounds
5 feet 11 inches	Height	5 feet 9 1/2 inches
45 inches	Chest	52 inches
34 inches	Waist	40 inches
42 inches	Hips	42 1/2 inches
22 inches	Thigh	20 inches
17 1/2 inches	Calf	18 inches
73 inches	Reach	75 inches
14 1/2 inches	Biceps	18 inches
14 inches	Forearms	14 1/2 inches
7 3/4 inches	Wrist	8 inches
9 inches	Ankle	9 inches
1 inch	Neck	10 inches

"The Muchnick Years" was a very enjoyable article. Don Gene Smith captured the essence of wrestling in St. Louis vividly. The fans were treated to an intelligent, well-planned and realistic product that emphasized wrestling and tradition. The All-Japan and New Japan promotions provide the most similar products to St. Louis in this era. Mr. Muchnick also treated the fans with the utmost respect, almost like friends or family, as illustrated by his reply to Mr. Smith's letter. The St. Louis Wrestling Club, and Sam Muchnick, was a class act in all respects. All present promotions could learn much from this example.

Mr. Muchnick took a four-week break during July each year. Instead of Wrestling At The Chase being aired at this time, shows from other promotions were shown. These primarily came from the Kansas City, Florida, Mid-Atlantic, and Indianapolis territories, with the WWWF occasionally thrown in. The fans were asked to write in if they saw anyone they liked and Mr. Muchnick would try to bring them to St. Louis. Jack Brisco, Ric Flair and Bruiser Brody were brought in due to this policy.

If you saw Starrcade '90, in person or on TV, then you saw the high regard Mr. Muchnick is still held in by the fans of St. Louis. Please remember that this is nearly NINE years after he retired! What other promoter is remembered that fondly today, or even remembered at all? Mr. Muchnick was also treated well by the St. Louis media and the sports community. Wrestling was given some respect and not treated as a joke.

Mr. Smith mentioned Larry Matysik.I find it ironic that he is the WWF promoter in St. Louis, which he has been almost since the expansion in 1984. Mr. Muchnick even sided with Mr. Matysik during his promotional war with the Pat O'Connor-led St. Louis Wrestling Club in the mid-Eighties. This has apparently led to much harsh feeling that has persisted after O'Connor's death last year.

Wrestling in St. Louis was something special and I miss it greatly. So do many others as one remark I repeatedly hear is that "wrestling today is so fake and stupid looking, not good like it was on Wrestling At The Chase." That says it all.

MICHAEL McGOWEN
JERSEYVILLE, IL.

Just thought I'd write to tell you how much I've enjoyed your zine, and also to tell you about a comic that may be of interest to your readers. No, not the WWF's or WCW's but a black and white from Monster Comics called "Tor Johnson, Superstar." This is a very funny book about the cult star of bad movies and tells quite a bit about his wrestling career where he was known as the Super Swedish Angel and King Kong. A word of warning though, the book is set up so that only the right hand pages are the real story, the left hand ones are complete fakes, so don't be too surprised to read about Tor starring in a Swedish wrestling movie with Greta Garbo. Especially interesting was a mention of his part in a movie called "Alias the Champ," a 50's movie about wrestling that they say contains an incredible locker room free for all starring a 50's who's who of the mat scene including Gorgeous George. If any of your readers can give more info on this film, or even better, a video copy of it, I'd be interested in it.

Keep up the good work.

BRIAN YELVERTON
SALEM, MA.

I have been reading your column in ARENA REPORT for about the last year. I have procrastinated until now to order your newsletter.

I guess I'm like a lot of wrestling fans lately. The best part of wrestling, for me, is the newsletters. I despise what Junior McMahon has done. WCW is the most inept group of individuals ever convened in one place. Memphis looks just like it did last week, last month, or last year. Global, well who knows? I'm pulling for them. They look like our last hope. I guess I'm just like everyone else; I wish it could go back to the territories. I mean is this progress?

KEITH PRIEST
ACWORTH, GA.

I live with my boyfriend, Mark. BE SURE and tell Gary Fishman that "wrestling & love" DO mix. He even tapes it for me during the day when I'm at work!!! Sometimes we even go to Portland to see it live!!!

CYNDY BIDERBOST
SEATTLE, WA.

HERMAN DUTCH ROHDE - BUDDY ROGERS

By MARY McCAULEY

Introducing — by special request — the fascinating Herman "Dutch" Rohde, better known as Buddy Rogers and Nature Boy! A native of Camden, N. J., of German descent, Buddy has one brother and lives with his mother. 6 feet, 230 lbs.. 33 years old, he has been wrestling for the past 20 years—14 years professionally and 6 years as an amateur. A 5-letter Man in High School, the blonde muscle man favors swimming, football and naturally, wrestling. In 1937 Buddy won the 3 mile swimming chamoionship in N. J. He also played fullback and tackle while in High School. War found our hero as an instructor in the U. S. Navy. He took a course in sheet metal work and when he received his apprenticeship papers he put it in his pocket and promptly forgot all about it. —

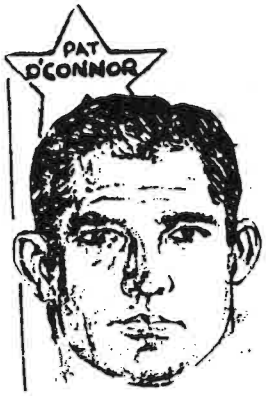
The amazing Mr. Rohde plans to promote wrestling after he retires — whenever that is going to be. With a mischevious grin Buddy tells me he's free, white and very available but would not be interested in getting married. Hmmm ! Too bad my friend! you'd make a fascinating husband despite your standing as a bad man of the ring. Which brings up this — upon asking the blonde gladiator what he thought about the public, he motioned indifferently with his hand and boldly replied: "The more they hate me the better I like it." I understand Buddy is investing most of his earnings in annuities. He tells me he owns 9 homes and spends most of his spare time looking after them. His great ambition is to wrestle the Amazing Rocca. They met in the ring once previously before a crowd of 14,800 spectators in a one hour match. The judges called it a draw after each man taking a fall and then going the time limit. His favorite hold by the way is the pile driver. Buddy likes to please the younger crowds and his greatest Fan Club is in Toledo, Ohio. Sorry to learn that he has left to tour the Toledo circuit again.

For the fans in Toledo who have asked me specially to interview Buddy, I say — "Nature Boy, Buddy Rogers is a swell guy and deserves the praise bestowed on him." See you all next week! him.

PAT O'CONNOR

The pride of New Zealand . . . Brought up in Massey where he became a blacksmith . . . Is 31 years old, six feet one and one half inches tall, 232 pounds, blue eyes and a handsome square jaw . . . Strong silent type . . . He is exponent of clean, fast wrestling as opposed to the questionable tactics of the "villains" . . . His favorite weapons are his drop kick and flying tackle . . .

Was a Rugby player in school ... Is a hunting and fishing enthusiast . . . What caused O'Connor to go into wrestling? "Simple", said O'Connor, "I figured it wouldn't be harder to get a hold on a man than on a horse."



THE BRITISH EMPIRE CHAMPION 1954

Pat O'Connor, a 230-pound Irishman from New Zealand, has spread a growing bontire across wrestling rings in the U. S. He has sparked it with a flying pair of feet which carry few equals.

O'Connor came to this country four short years ago. He had ranked as British Empire champion, a master of the dropkick and the airplane spin. Before long he drew 20,000 folks into a Chicago house of mayhem, and 10,000 or more in such towns as Buffalo, Syracuse and Des Moines. The lady fans especially found stimulation in his power-filled tactics.

Back in Ranganu, New Zealand, the O'Connor clan owns a 5,000 acre ranch, filled with 7,000 good sheep, which Patrick will inherit some day. But first he aims to win the world's mat crown. The ambition was forged after an all-around sports career at Massey University, near Wellington, N. Z., where Patrick starred in rugby, rowing and wrestling, and then took a degree in agriculture.

To build himself up, he opened a blacksmith shop in Wellington, foresaking his dad's offer to handle the home ranch. The arms and chest grew rapidly until, at 27, he stands among the best-formed men in sports. His advent in America found an immediate appeal, and Patrick was sensitive to the applause; he decided to settle here indefinitely; he married an American girl. Yes, it may be a good long time before he ever gets back to the O'Connor property in Ranganu.

Friends might say that Patrick is nuts. He could have settled into a life of ease, a sort of aristocrat in New Zealand, instead of working feverishly on the mats across the states, traveling 3,000 miles or so each week.

"Why do I pass up the rich rancher's life?" says Patrick. "Maybe it's because a fellow sometimes hates to let a good body and size-20 neck and restless arms go to waste."

ANOTHER GREAT SHOW

at

ST. NICK'S ARENA

66th St. & Broadway

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1954

PAT O'CONNOR

VS

HANS SCHMIDT

Plus Tag Team Match & Other Good Bouts — NO T.V.

TICKETS AND MAIL ORDERS — JOHNSTON'S
1476 Broadway (42nd St.) Room 809 -- BR. 9-2350

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN

OFFICIAL PROGRAM — MONDAY, MAY 16, 1955

2 OUT OF 3 FALLS TO A FINISH

Antonino Rocca vs. Verne Gagne

Won DRAW — Time

1st. Game 20:49
2nd. Rocca 13:04
3rd. DRAW

Time Limit

Hans SCHMIDT VS Pat O'CONNOR

Won O'CONNOR — Time 23:50 Submission

Time Limit

Yukon ERIC VS Hans SCHNABEL

Won Eric — Time 20:04

Time Limit

Ralph HALPERN VS Pedro ESCOBAR

Won Halpern — Time 8:59

TAG TEAM MATCH

Tony MARTINELLI, Angelo SAVOLDI vs. Reggie LISOWSKI, Art NEILSON

Won Martinelli & Savoldi — Time disq.

Time Limit

Tony GALENTO vs. Arnold SKAALAND

Won GALENTO — Time 20:40

MATERIALS GRACIOUSLY SUPPLIED BY:

STEVE YOHE
HOWARD ROTH
DR. MIKE LANO

BUDDY ROGERS

The recognized N.W.A. WORLD'S HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION

6'1", 242 pounds, 36 years old. Born in Camden, N. J. One of the most perfectly developed wrestlers in the history of the sport, Buddy has found that boos and jeers pay off to the tune of a plush annual income exceeding $100,000. A pro wrestler for over 15 years his trademark is arrogance and a strut that always brings forth jeers and catcalls from the fans. Says Buddy, "The fans hate me with a passion but it hasn't phased me yet. Their criticism bounces off me like water off a duck's back. Class will always tell." One of pro wrestling's all-time greats, Rogers has won enough trophies and plaques to cover one wall in his Camden, N. J. home. He has been winning state and regional titles in the heavyweight division since he was 21 years old. He has a standing offer of $1,000 to ANY wrestler who can break Rogers' "Figure Four Grapevine" hold, once applied. "Nature Boy" is presently campaigning in the East and Midwest under the exclusive management of one Bob Davis, a 6'4", 200 pounder who goes by the monicker "The Bat Masterson of Wrestling." Davis is always in Rogers' company when the Blonde Adonis goes into combat, replete with tuxedo and carrying a cane.